



Program Handbook

Denton Independent School District

www.DentonISD.org/EXPO

Grace Anne McKay, Director of Advanced Academics

(940) 369-0654

gmckay2@dentonisd.org

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This program handbook, accessible to parents, community, and students, is designed to describe all Denton ISD gifted/talented programs, services, assessments, and district contact information (1.10.1) and to demonstrate that student assessment and services in Denton ISD are in compliance with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students (1.1) (19 TAC §89.5).

Denton ISD Mission Statement

Empowering lifelong learners to be engaged citizens who positively impact their local and global community.

Philosophy

The Denton Independent School District is dedicated to developing the unique personal, social, and intellectual abilities of its gifted and talented students. A commitment has been made to provide appropriate and stimulating materials, activities, and instruction for these students of varying abilities, interests, needs, and environmental backgrounds so they may experience success in the development of their potential.

EXPO's Mission Statement

The Denton ISD Gifted and Talented program provides students who possess exceptional gifts and talents the direction, time, encouragement, and resources to maximize their potential through a quality environment of advanced and complex curriculum above and beyond the regular classroom while ensuring intellectual integrity and dedication to community, family and learning.

Position Statement

In all realms of humanity, excellence is recognized, applauded, and rewarded. Professions, industries, and arts have acknowledged eminence in their respective fields through multiple and varied channels. Education makes a significant contribution by recognizing the potential for excellence among students, by nurturing its expansion and growth, and by removing impediments to the development of all students to the maximum potential.

Educators in the Denton Independent School District are aware that there are students in the district that have the potential for excellence and that more could be done to foster its development. The Texas State Legislature, the Texas State Board of Education, and the Texas Education Agency have emphasized the need for providing appropriate instructional programs for these students.

Goals and Objectives

There are certain lifelong learning skills that should be a part of every gifted student's school program. Gifted students should develop advanced research and study skills. They should be able to think critically and creatively about problems that are presented to them. They should possess the poise and understanding of group dynamics that will make them effective leaders in the future, and they should recognize the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

This does not mean that research and personal study skills, critical and creative thinking ability, and leadership skills are the exclusive domain of gifted students. Gifted students, however, tend to master the essential knowledge and skills more quickly than most students. Because of this, they should be permitted to extend their education as far and as completely as possible in areas of importance to their development.

Denton ISD has adopted the following goals for its EXPO Program: The EXPO Program will provide space, time, encouragement, and opportunities for gifted students to explore areas of their own interest and ability. Specifically, these students will:

1. utilize higher, more complex-level thinking skills to develop intellectual curiosity in critical, creative, and productive thinking.
2. develop the research skills and personal study skills necessary for self-directed learning. They will conduct independent studies and research projects that extend the regular curriculum and result in the synthesis of elaborate products.
3. understand and apply the problem-solving process in a cooperative group setting through analysis and evaluation of real life situations.
4. use listening, speaking, and written communication through scholarly behaviors in order to integrate and extend skills in their regular classrooms.
5. gain an understanding and respect of individual abilities and effective leadership skills with peers, recognizing the likenesses and differences between themselves and others, while developing their own unique abilities.

Definitions

Acceleration

Acceleration is an academic intervention that matches the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student. It involves mastering knowledge and skills at a rate faster or at an age earlier than the norm. (Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., & Gross, M. U. M. (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students* (Vol. 1). Iowa City: University of Iowa)

Depth

Exploration of content within a discipline to include analyzing from the concrete to the abstract, the familiar to the unfamiliar, the known to the unknown; exploring the discipline by going beyond facts and concepts into generalizations, principles, theories, laws; investigating the layers of experience within a discipline through details, patterns, trends, unanswered questions, and/or ethical considerations

Differentiation

Modification of curriculum and instruction according to content, pacing, process, and/or product to meet unique student needs in the classroom

EXPO

EXPO is the Denton ISD term for the gifted/talent program. EXPO is an acronym that represents Exceptional Potential.

Flexible Pacing

Flexible pacing is defined as placing students at an appropriate instructional level and allowing them to move forward in the curriculum as they master content and skills. Flexible pacing is achieved by such methods as continuous progress, compacted course, advanced level courses, grade skipping, early entrance, concurrent or dual enrollment, and credit by examination.

Gifted and Talented Student

"Gifted and talented student" means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who:

1. Exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
2. Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
3. Excels in a specific academic field. (§29.121)

Gifted students require educational experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Students shall be identified through the use of multiple criteria as specified by the Denton Independent School District. The district recognizes that students identified as gifted and talented can come from all races, socioeconomic groups, geographical locales, and environments.

GT or G/T

GT is an acronym that represents the phrase "gifted and talented."

Qualitative Measures

Performance indicators that cannot be recorded numerically and that include observations, anecdotal records, checklists, interviews, student products, performances, etc.

Quantitative Measure

Performance indicators that can be expressed in terms of definite numbers or amounts such as scores on achievement tests

Twice-Exceptional

A “twice-exceptional learner” is a child or youth who performs at—or shows the potential for performing at—a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who meets the definition of a gifted and talented student (TEC 29.121), and who also gives evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria.

Program Design

The EXPO Program at Denton Independent School District offers instruction and opportunities for students identified by their general intellectual ability. All EXPO Specialists are trained to provide instruction that will lead to completion of projects that require complex thinking, problem solving, and advanced learning. The use of a variety of organizational patterns will effectively lead to maximizing the potential of gifted and talented students.

Services for gifted/talented students are comprehensive, structured, sequenced, and appropriately challenging, including options in the four (4) foundation curricular areas. (3.3) Identified students are assured an array of learning opportunities that are commensurate with their abilities. (3.1) Specialists and advocates for gifted/ talented students are consulted in the development of program policies and options. (3.1.1) (4.1)

Elementary Grades

Identified students in grades K – 5th will be served through a pull-out class by a trained gifted specialist at their campus.(4.7) After being identified, Kindergarten EXPO students will be served for a minimum of 45 minutes per week and EXPO students in grades one – five will be served for a minimum of 2 ½ hours per week. The Denton ISD Gifted and Talented Curriculum Scope and Sequence will be followed. Students may receive gifted services in either a grade specific class or in a multi-age class, whichever will allow for the most appropriate instruction and schedule. Elementary EXPO classes will be cancelled very seldomly during the school year. This is so that the EXPO Specialists will be able to test students for placement into the EXPO program.

When assigning students to homeroom classes, it is recommended that gifted students be clustered in groups of 3 – 5 to allow for these students to serve as a resource to each other. Students who have been placed in the EXPO program are expected to attend EXPO classes. Attendance in EXPO is not optional. If a classroom assignment is missed in the regular class while the student is attending EXPO, that student should not be expected to make it up or do it as homework. The student's grades should not be negatively affected for missing assignments while in EXPO. EXPO students will receive an EXPO progress report every 9 weeks. The EXPO Specialist will be available to assist any classroom teacher with enrichment activities.

Middle School

Identified 6th, 7th, and 8th grade EXPO students will meet in a daily English Language Arts EXPO class in which they will receive an academic grade.(4.7) The Denton ISD Gifted and Talented Curriculum Scope and Sequence, as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, will be followed. Additionally, the EXPO Specialists will focus on creative and critical thinking skills as well as research assignments leading to advanced products. Additionally EXPO students may also be served in Math 6 Honors, Math 7 Honors, and MS Algebra I Honors, which is an accelerated pathway. Honors classes in the remaining core academic areas are also available to these students. (The MS Course Planning Guide provides more details on these course options.) The EXPO Specialist will be available to assist any classroom teacher with enrichment activities.

High School

The high school EXPO students in grades 9th – 12th will have the opportunity to enroll in Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Dual Credit courses taught by qualified G/T teachers. These teachers will complete the state required training and/or The College Board Advanced Placement training as well as training in the nature and needs and identification and assessment of gifted students. In order to remain active in EXPO, high school students should enroll in at least one Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Dual Credit course each year. The high school guidance office is available to assist gifted students with meeting the requirements for the Distinguished Level of Achievement, Dual Credit enrollment, college and scholarship applications, and any special situation that may arise.

Scheduling modifications for EXPO students in high schools include flexible course progressions (such as doubling up in courses provided the prerequisites are met) and offering seminar elective courses (such as AP Seminar and AP Research or IB Theory of Knowledge). (4.7)

Groupings

Gifted/talented students are ensured opportunities to work together as a group, work with other students, and work independently during the school day as well as the entire school year as a direct result of gifted/talented service options (19 TAC §89.3(1)). (3.4) Flexible grouping patterns and independent investigations are provided throughout the program design/services. (3.5)

Out-of-School Options

Out-of-school options relevant to the students' areas of strength are provided by school districts whenever possible (19 TAC §89.3(3)). (3.1, 3.6) Some of these extracurricular activities may include Baylor Talent Identification Program, University Interscholastic League Academic Contests, Junior National Honor Society, National Honor Society, Destination Imagination, and various specialized organizations. Information concerning special opportunities (i.e. contests, academic recognition, summer camps, community programs, etc.) is available and disseminated to parents and community members. (3.2)

Acceleration and Flexible Pacing

Students are able to accelerate grade levels in K-8 and to access advanced learning experiences in areas of strengths in all grade levels (19 TAC §89.3(4)) (4.5). Flexible pacing is employed (4.6), allowing students to learn at the pace and level appropriate for their abilities and skills. Acceleration opportunities are actively facilitated by district administrators, counselors, and teachers. (3.8) These may include credit by examination (19 TAC §74.24), honors courses, early high school graduation opportunities (TEC §56.203) (3.7), dual/concurrent enrollment, distance learning opportunities, and accelerated summer programs if available. (3.9)

Social and Emotional Learning

Services to address the social and emotional needs of gifted/ talented students and their impact on student learning are developed and implemented. (3.11)

Scheduling

Scheduling modifications are implemented in order to meet the identified needs of individual students. (4.7)

District Leadership

District level services for gifted/talented students in grades K-12 is coordinated by a person who has thirty (30) hours of professional learning in gifted/talented education and annual six (6) hour professional learning updates as required in 19 TAC §89.2(1). (3.10)

Campus Improvement Plans

Provisions to improve services to gifted/ talented students are included in district and campus improvement plans (TEC §§11.25111.253).

EXPO Committees

EXPO Placement Committee

The EXPO Placement Committee is comprised of both a campus-level committee and a district-level committee. The campus committee -- comprised of at least an administrator, a counselor, and a GT specialist -- reviews all referrals and transfers tested for placement into the program. The campus committee then makes an initial recommendation, including any advocacy concerns, to a district committee to either place the student, gather additional evidence, or not place the student in the program. The district committee typically affirms and finalizes the campus committee's recommendation unless the placement guidelines were not followed accurately. All members will have training in the nature and needs of gifted children. (Note: Some campuses refer to the campus-level placement committee as the "screening committee.")

District EXPO Appeal Committee

The EXPO Appeal Committee is comprised of two or more committee members -- at least one member is from the district Advanced Academics department and any remaining members are campus EXPO specialists.

District EXPO Advisory Committee

The EXPO Advisory Committee will meet as needed to provide support and assistance to the EXPO Program regarding program planning and improvement. (6.4.1) Membership may include, but not be limited to, the Director of Advanced Academics, EXPO Specialists, parents of EXPO students, administrators, classroom teachers, counselors, and community members. (1.2)

Parents and Community

Information on how parents and others can make recommendations and referrals for students who may need gifted/talented services is provided by each campus. (6.3)

The Denton ISD EXPO website and this handbook informs parents of all gifted/talented services and opportunities. (19 TAC §89.3) (6.5)

Products and achievements of gifted/talented students are shared with the community. (6.6)
Orientation and periodic updates are provided for parents of students who are identified as gifted/talented and provided gifted/talented services. (6.7)

Parents interested in an opportunity in participating in a G/T parent association and/or gifted/talented advocacy group can reach out to any of the following gifted organizations for more information. (6.4)

- TAGT, 1-512-499-8248, www.txgifted.org
- NAGC, www.nagc.org
- SENG, www.sengifted.org

Budget

To the extent that state funding is provided for gifted/talented student education, local funding for gifted/talented education programs is used to supplement the state funding. (1.3/1.3.1)(1.4)

Funds used for programs and services are determined effective and consistent with the standards set forth in the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students. (1.12)

Student Identification

Identification of students is conducted, not to label students as gifted, but rather to locate students who have specific needs which can be more effectively met through differentiated instruction in the EXPO program.

Students in grades K–12 shall be assessed and, if identified, provided gifted/talented services (TEC §29.122 and 19 TAC §89.1(3)). (2.16) Written policies are developed on gifted/ talented student identification, approved by the local board of trustees and disseminated to parents (19 TAC §89.1). (6.1)

The identification and placement of students for participation in the program is determined by a three-step process: (1) referral, (2) assessment, and (3) placement. The final placement decision is made by the District EXPO Placement Committee.

Written policies on student identification for gifted/talented services are approved by the district board of trustees and disseminated to all parents (19 TAC §89.1). Board approved policies are reviewed at least once every three years and modified as needed. (2.1.1)

Provisions for ongoing identification of students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment in each area of giftedness served by the district are included in board approved policy (19 TAC §89.1(1)). (2.14) The identification process for gifted/ talented services is ongoing, and assessment of students occurs at any time the need arises. (2.14.1) Assessment opportunities for gifted/ talented identification are made available to students at least once a year at the elementary grades and once a semester at the secondary level. (2.15.1) Students may test only once in a twelve-month testing period.

Input from family and community representatives on gifted/talented identification and assessment procedures is invited annually. (6.2)

Referrals

Referrals may come from faculty/staff, parents, community members, or at the secondary level, by self-referral. Persons referring students must complete a general Referral Form. The campus EXPO Specialist will accept referrals at any time. This will begin the process of data collection from various sources regarding the child's ability and potential. After the referral is received at the campus, communication will be sent to the parent. Concerns or inquiries regarding EXPO should be addressed to the campus EXPO Specialists in grades kindergarten - eight and with the designated GT Contact Person on the high school campuses.

Referral procedures and forms for assessment of gifted/talented students are communicated to families in a language and form that the families understand or a translator or interpreter is provided to the extent possible. (2.2/2.3/2.3.1)

Please refer to the EXPO website for the referral form and testing windows. Go to www.dentonisd.org/expo.

In order for the population of the gifted/talented services program to be more closely reflective of the population of the total district and/or campus (2.25), students identified as at risk should receive special consideration during the referral process to ensure they are not overlooked. Their unique circumstances may mask advanced potential, making it essential to approach their identification with intentionality.

Assessment

Access to assessment and, if needed, gifted/talented services is available to all populations of the district (19 TAC §89.1(3)). (2.24)

An awareness session providing an overview of the assessment procedures and services for gifted/talented students is offered for families by the district and/or campus prior to the referral period. (2.5) All family meetings are offered in a language families can understand or a translator or interpreter is provided to the extent possible. (2.6)

Data collected from multiple sources for each area of giftedness served by the district are included in the assessment process for gifted/talented services (19 TAC §89.1(2)). The assessment process allows for student exceptionalities to the extent possible. (2.17)

Based on a review of information gathered during the assessment process, students whose data reflect that gifted/talented services will be the most effective way to meet their identified educational needs are recommended by the placement committee for gifted/talented services. (2.18)

Elementary

In grades 1 through 5, testing is available twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Please refer to the district website for exact dates and deadlines. Students identified as gifted in the school district from which they are transferring will test during the first six-week period. Students in grades one through five will test throughout the year as time permits. EXPO specialists will test approximately 20 to 30 students per session. If there are more than 30 referrals, they will be tested the following session in the order received.

All kindergarten students are automatically considered for gifted/talented and other advanced level services. (2.20) All kindergarten students are considered for assessment with a universal screener by the EXPO program. Kindergarten students will participate in assessment activities conducted by the EXPO Specialist and supported by the regular classroom teacher. At the end of the general assessment period, a pool of referred kindergarten students will be further assessed during December and January. In addition to kindergarten, a universal screener may be administered in other grade levels as determined by the district.

Secondary

Testing will be available twice each year for middle and high school students, once in the fall and once in the spring. Students identified as gifted in the school district from which they are transferring will test during the first six-week period. Please refer to the webpage for exact dates and deadlines.

Assessment Results

Families and staff are informed of individual student assessment results and placement decisions as well as given opportunities to schedule conferences to discuss assessment data. (2.4)

Assessment Tools

Kindergarten

At the kindergarten level, as many criteria as possible, and at least three (3), are used to assess students who perform at or show the potential of accomplishment relative to age peers. (2.21)
The following qualitative and quantitative instruments may be used in the assessment process for referred students in kindergarten:

- Teacher Survey
- Parent Survey
- Portfolio
- Abilities Test

1st – 12th Grades

In grades 1–12, qualitative and quantitative data are collected through three (3) or more measures and used to determine whether a student needs gifted/talented services. (2.22)

The following qualitative instruments may be used in the assessment process for referred students in grades one through twelve:

- Teacher Survey
- Parent Survey

The following quantitative instruments may be used in the assessment process for referred students in grades one through twelve:

- Abilities Test
- Achievement Test
- Creativity Test

All students are assessed in languages they understand or with non-verbal based tests. (2.19)
All populations of the district have access to assessment, and if identified, services offered as part of the program for gifted students. Students may only be tested once per calendar year.

After the assessment instruments have been administered and scored, each student's scores will be recorded on an EXPO Student Profile.

Placement

Placement Committee

Final determination of a student's need for gifted/talented services is made by a committee of at least three (3) local district or campus educators who have received training in the nature and needs of gifted/talented students and have met and reviewed the individual student data (19 TAC §89.1(4)). (2.26)

The campus committee -- comprised of at least an administrator, a counselor, and a GT specialist -- makes an initial recommendation to a district committee to place the student, gather additional evidence, or not place the student in the program. The district committee typically affirms and finalizes the campus screening committee's recommendation unless the placement guidelines were not followed accurately.

The placement committee is formed of a majority of members who have completed thirty (30) hours of training and are current with the six-hour training update as required by 19 TAC §89.2(2-3). (2.27, 2.27.1)

Kindergarten

The criteria for placement for students in kindergarten is an ability score, a portfolio score, and at least one other score at or above the District Line:

	District Line
1. Parent Survey	Moderate to Strong Evidence
2. Teacher Survey	Moderate to Strong Evidence
3. Portfolio	9 or Higher
4. Intelligence/Abilities Test	125 or Higher

1st – 12th Grades

The criteria for placement for students in grades 1 through 12 require at least one score at or above the District Line on the qualitative assessments (#1-2 below), and at least two scores at or above the District Line on the quantitative assessments (#3-5 below).

	District Line
1. Parent Survey	Moderate to Strong Evidence
2. Teacher Survey	Moderate to Strong Evidence
3. Intelligence/Abilities Test (3 parts)*	125 or Higher (on at least one part)*
4. Achievement Test (2 parts)	95% or Higher (on at least one part)
5. Creativity Test	95% or Higher

*Students scoring 125 or higher on 2 or 3 parts of the intelligence/abilities test may be given special consideration for program placement, as determined by the placement committee.

Additional Data

Additional data beyond that collected through the district's standard gifted/talented assessment process are considered, as needed, by the placement committee in making identification decisions in order to make the most appropriate placement. (2.28/2.28.1)

The EXPO District Placement Committee will have the option of reviewing any student's profile for special consideration for program placement. Parents will then be informed by the Director of Advanced Academics. Please see the district website/EXPO Forms for deadlines.

Appeal Procedure

Policy related to appeals allows parents, students, and educators to appeal placement decisions in a timely manner and to present new data, if appropriate. (2.13)

Step 1 : Appeal Form

If the parent is not satisfied with the placement, the parent must complete the District EXPO Appeal form and return it to the campus EXPO specialist within 10 business days of the placement notification. The appeal form requires campus administrator signature.

The appeal form is found on the Denton ISD EXPO website at <http://www.dentonisd.org/expo> under the "GT/EXPO Forms" section.

Note: Before appealing, parents should have met with the student's EXPO specialist and campus administrator to better understand the placement decision.

Step 2 : Appeal Review

The appeal is presented to the District EXPO Appeal Committee by the Director of Advanced Academics at the next appeal committee meeting. The committee meets periodically throughout the school year. Records of the results of the meeting will be kept and final decisions will be sent to the parent immediately following the meeting.

Step 3 : Grievance

If the parent is still not satisfied with the placement decision, the parent may initiate a grievance through the office of the Superintendent. (See [Policy FNG.](#))

Furloughs, Re-Assessment, and Exiting

Provisions regarding transfer students, furloughs, reassessment, exiting of students from program services, and appeals of district decisions regarding program placement are included in board-approved policy (19 TAC §89.1(5)). (2.7)

Furloughs

Policy is adopted allowing student furlough (the opportunity for students to have a leave of absence from gifted/talented program services) for specified reasons and for a certain period of time without being exited. (2.10)

A parent or student may request a furlough from the EXPO program for up to one school year when extenuating circumstances occur (i.e. DAEP... Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, personal problems, illness, etc.). Parental permission is required for the furlough to be in effect. The furlough will usually last for the remainder of the school year. The student will automatically be re-enrolled in the program when the time of the furlough has elapsed. A student may have only one furlough throughout their school career, unless the Campus Screening Committee determines that it would be in the best educational interest of the student to grant a subsequent furlough due to extreme circumstances.

Re-Assessment

Denton ISD does not typically reassess students for G/T services once they are placed in the EXPO program. (2.11)

Probation/Exiting

Policy related to exiting of students from gifted/talented services is based on multiple criteria including student performance in response to services. Interventions are provided prior to committee decision. Exiting a student is finalized by committee decision after consultation with parents and student regarding the student's educational needs. (2.12/2.12.1)

Exiting from the EXPO Program will only occur when continued placement would not be the most appropriate educational placement for a student. If the EXPO Specialist believes that program participation is not meeting a student's needs, the student may be placed on EXPO Probation for a set period of time. If at the end of that probationary period the student is still not making the appropriate gains, a meeting will be held to discuss exiting that student. A parent or a student may also request exiting from the program. Educational, psychological, and personal reasons will be considered. An exited student may not reapply for admission until one full year has expired. At that time, the student will be required to go through the referral process and requalify for the program.

Transfer Students

Provisions regarding transfer students are included in board-approved policy (19 TAC §89.1(5)). (2.7) Equitable access to gifted/talented services for transfer students is provided through board-approved policy that is developed in consideration of current best-practice recommendations. (2.8/2.8.1)

When a gifted/talented student transfers to another district either in or out of Texas, that district is provided with the student's assessment data by the sending district. (2.9)

Students transferring to the Denton Independent School District from a gifted and talented program at their previous school will be assessed to determine if placement into the EXPO Program would be beneficial. A Denton EXPO Specialist will assess all transfer students within six weeks of enrollment. Information required from previous schools includes qualitative and quantitative data showing placement into their gifted program and the years served in the program.

Transfer students must meet the criteria set by the Denton Independent School District's Gifted and Talented Program. The teacher survey will not be used, as the student will be new into the classroom. For transfer students, the qualitative data requirement will include the parent survey and this lone qualitative instrument along with quantitative data will then be taken into consideration by the placement committee. If the district criteria are not met, the student will not be placed into the EXPO Program.

Curriculum

A scope and sequence is followed that illustrates the target concepts and skills which are taught through activities designed for gifted students in grades K-12. A continuum of learning experiences is provided that leads to the development of advanced-level products and/or performances. (4.3) The EXPO curriculum focuses on critical and creative thinking skills, higher order thinking skills, in-depth research leading to advanced products and/or performances, and affective skills for the special needs of the gifted children.

Opportunities are provided for students to pursue areas of interest in selected disciplines through guided and independent research. (4.2)

EXPO curriculum is modified based on annual evaluations. (1.9)

Gifted/talented curriculum is designed and evaluated through collaboration by specialists in content areas, special populations, instructional techniques, and gifted/talented education. (1.9.1)

The EXPO curriculum includes participation in the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP), or other experiences that result in the development of sophisticated products and/or performances that are targeted to an audience outside the classroom. (4.4)

The development and delivery of curriculum for gifted/talented students is monitored regularly by trained administrators. (1.7)

Educators adapt and/or modify the core or standard curriculum to meet the needs of gifted/talented students and those with special needs such as twice-exceptional, highly gifted, and English learners. (4.9)

Resources

District guidelines for evaluation of resources used to serve gifted/talented students are established and used in selecting materials that are appropriate for differentiated learning. (1.8)

Professional Learning

Opportunities for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education are provided on a regular basis, and information on them is disseminated to professionals in the district. (5.5)

Gifted/talented services staff are involved in planning, reviewing, and/or conducting the district's gifted/talented professional learning. (5.12)

After each legislative session, an update is provided to administrators, counselors, and board of trustees. (5.13)

Teachers

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are part of the program for gifted students will earn a minimum of thirty (30) clock hours of professional learning that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, identification and assessment of gifted/talented students, and curriculum and instruction for gifted/talented students.(5.1)

Teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the district's defined gifted/talented services receive a minimum of six (6) hours annually of professional learning in gifted/talented education that is related to state teacher gifted/talented education standards (19 TAC §89.2(3) and TAC §233.1).(5.6)

Teachers are required to have completed the thirty (30) hours of professional learning prior to their assignment to the district's gifted/talented services. (19 TAC §89.2(1)) (5.1). Teachers without required training who are assigned to provide instruction and services that are part of the district's defined gifted/ talented services are required to complete the thirty (30) hour training within one semester (19 TAC §89.2(2)) (5.2) Teachers are encouraged to obtain additional professional learning in their teaching discipline and/or in gifted/talented education. (5.3)

Administrators and Counselors

Administrators who have authority for program decisions are required to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of professional learning that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options for gifted/ talented students (19 TAC §89.2(3)) (5.8).

Counselors who work with gifted/talented students are required to complete a minimum of six (6) hours of professional learning that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, program options for gifted/talented students, and social emotional learning (19 TAC §89.2(3)) (5.9).

A written plan for professional learning in the area of gifted/talented education that is based on identified needs is implemented and updated annually. (5.4)

Professional learning time and/or extended contracts are provided to enable teachers at all levels to form horizontal and vertical teams that coordinate gifted/talented services in the district. (1.13.1) (4.10.1)

New-to-Denton Teachers

Annually, each teacher new to the district receives an orientation to the district's gifted/ talented identification processes and the district's services for gifted/talented students. (5.7)

Board of Trustees

Local district boards of trustees are trained to ensure program accountability based on the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/ Talented Students (19 TAC §89.5).(5.10)

Evaluation of Professional Learning

Evaluation of professional learning activities for gifted/talented education is ongoing and related to state teacher gifted/talented education standards, and the results of the evaluation are used in making decisions regarding future staff development plans (19 TAC §89.5 and TAC §233.1).(5.11)

Program Evaluation

Annual program evaluation activities are conducted for the purpose of continued program improvement. (1.5) This might include but is not limited to EXPO staff input, student surveys, parent surveys, principal surveys, and EXPO Advisory Committee input.

Student progress/performance in response to gifted/talented services is periodically assessed using standards in the areas served and identified in the written plan. Results are communicated to parents or guardians. (2.29)

Ongoing formative and summative evaluation strategies, based on quantitative and qualitative data, are reviewed by the school board and used for substantive program improvement and development. (1.5.1)

Long-range evaluation of services is based on evidence obtained through gifted/talented-appropriate performance measures such as those provided through the Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP). (1.6)

If it is determined that for any standard of service the district is out of compliance, a written plan will be developed specifying actions and timelines for achieving compliance. (1.11)

The effectiveness of gifted/talented services is evaluated annually, shared with the board of trustees, and the data is used to modify and update district and campus improvement plans. Parents are included in the evaluation process, and the outcomes and findings of the evaluation are shared with parents (TEC §§11.251–11.253). (6.8)

Characteristics of the Gifted and Talented

From *Raising Champions*, 2nd Ed. Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented

This list of general characteristics will help you understand and evaluate your child's gifts and talents. Probably no child has high levels of performance in all of the categories. The more gifted and talented a child is, the more of these traits will show:

- Very verbal, asks many questions, uses advanced vocabulary, wants to know why, how, and what about many things (or everything). They surprise you, your friends, or family with the questions asked or the words used.
- Imaginative, playful, have an imaginary playmate, daydreams, becomes absorbed in thoughts.
- Good memory, learns rapidly, accurately remembers things for a long time.
- Has interests in a wide range of topics, wants to know everything about a chosen interest.
- Acutely aware of right and wrong, sensitive to others feelings, strong sense of fairness.
- Critical of others, but has difficulty accepting criticism; demands unrealistic perfection from self, especially in certain areas.
- Displays boundless energy, requires less sleep, is always in motion.

Suggestions for Home (if age appropriate)

- Jigsaw Puzzles
- Brain Teaser Puzzles, Problem Solver Puzzles and Books
- Reference Material/Books
- Video Games (great for quick thinking/problem solving/strategic planning, and hand-eye coordination, but monitored and limited)
- Conversation (high level)
- Cause/Effect Toys or Games

Suggestions for Parents

- Listen to Your Child
- Encourage Your Child
- Advocate for Your Child
- Provide Enrichment Opportunities/Experiences

Books/ Websites

- www.mindwareonline.com
- www.piecesoflearning.com
- *Raising Champions* (978-1882664801), Published by TAGT
- www.prufrock.com
- Hoagies' Gifted Education Page, www.hoagiesgifted.org
- Davidson Institute for Talent Development, www.davidsongifted.org
- Talent Development Resources, www.talentdevelop.com
- The Gifted Guru, www.giftedguru.com

Gifted Organizations

- TAGT, 1-512-499-8248, www.txgifted.org
- NAGC, www.nagc.org
- SENG, www.sengifted.org

20 Tips for Nurturing Gifted Children

1. Appreciate gifted learners as children. Just as all children do, they need love, friendship, reasonable standards of behavior, responsibility, time management skills, free time, and creative pursuits. They need your involvement in their development of independence. Appreciate them for who they are rather than who they may become.
2. Interact with families with gifted children. Gifted children seek interest-mates and intellectual-peers as well as age peers. You may also find solace interacting with another parent who lives with and loves a gifted child.
3. Recognize how the personal and instructional needs of a gifted child differ from others. Gifted students require intellectual peers who understand more abstract ideas and get their jokes. They learn best when instruction is at a pace and level that respond to their accelerated readiness to learn.
4. Appreciate the differences among high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers. Skim the accompanying chart that compares high achievers, gifted learners, and creative thinkers and ponder which column or combinations of columns best fit your child. Consider discussing the chart with your children to elicit their perceptions.
5. Understand the developmental crises for gifted students. Linda Silverman cautions that gifted students experience uneven development, underachievement often related to a lack of curriculum challenge, conflict between achievement and popularity, and difficulty selecting a career due to multipotentiality. For further information: www.bertiekingore.com.
6. Assure your child that being different is okay. Gifted children can feel disconnected from age peers who interpret so differently. Help them appreciate individual differences in others and themselves. Provide a place where it is safe for children to be themselves.
7. Be an encourager. A parent uniquely understands the whole child as you view your child in multiple scenarios over an extended period of time. As an encourager, validate your child's worth and goals as you encourage passions for learning.
8. Emphasize that what is learned is more important than any grade. Interact enthusiastically as your child shares school work with you. Rather than focus upon the grade, prompt your child's response with: *Tell me about what you learned doing this? Draw a star by something that you did well or liked doing.*
9. Be an active listener and elicit children's perceptions. Strive to understand their messages and feelings rather than too quickly respond to their words. Insure that children know you respect them and are genuinely interested in their information. Power struggles can be deferred with a request for their view instead of a barrage of our answers. *What do you think we can do about this? How do you feel about it? Why do you think that happened?*
10. Follow their interests and leads in learning situations rather than pressure them with your agenda. Our goals may not be their goals. Consult them on issues affecting them whenever you believe they understand the consequences.

11. Talk up to them. Advanced vocabularies lead to higher comprehension and achievement.
12. Enjoy music, plays, museums, art, sports, and historical places together and discuss the experience. These shared cultural experiences give family members warm memories to talk about over the years.
13. Model life-long learning habits. Talk about current events and volunteer with your child to help others. Our actions may model more than our words.
14. Facilitate real-life reading, writing, science, and math experiences. Get library cards and go to the library together. Enjoy browsing. Help children find good books and materials in the areas in which they express interest. Start at an early age to shop together with a list and a budget, write thank you notes and invitations, and plan the area and plants for a garden. One gifted sixth grader expressed sincere appreciation for geometry skills after working with his father to plot a patio space and cover.
15. Give books and learning games as presents, and then spend time together reading and playing those games. Research supports that reading and playing card and board games increases vocabulary, math skills, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.
16. Recognize that gifted children need to question and respond critically. They sometimes are impatient with conventions, such as spelling, grammar, rules, and even patience for others. Talk frankly about the importance of conventions without stifling their creativity and spirit.
17. Maintain a sense of humor! As a parent, every day we can choose to laugh or cry.
18. Support school efforts to differentiate and provide services for advanced and gifted children. Consider attending school in-service programs on differentiation and the needs of gifted children.
19. As appropriate, supply home perspectives and feedback on your child's well-being, responses to learning, and interests. No matter what our occupations, I have always believed that our children are our greatest work.
20. Be an advocate more than an advisory.

Kingore, B. (2008). 20 Tips for nurturing gifted children. *Gifted Education Communicator*. California Association for the Gifted, Summer, 2008. In Press.

High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker

Bertie Kingore (2004)

A HIGH ACHIEVER...	A GIFTED LEARNER...	A CREATIVE THINKER...
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answers the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions form multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects than will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original and continually developing.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert, abstracting beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.

